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**PNC'S \$350,000 GRANT TO THE LOUISVILLE ZOO HELPS PRESCHOOLERS
BECOME KINDERGARTEN-READY**

*Programming created and delivered by the Louisville Zoo at new,
permanent early learning play space and in school classrooms*

LOUISVILLE, Feb. 3, 2016 – The PNC Foundation today announced the launch of a \$350,000, three-year grant to assist with the construction of a permanent early learning play space at the Louisville Zoo. In addition, the grant will fund two new programs geared toward addressing kindergarten readiness gaps defined by 2014-15 Kentucky Kindergarten Readiness Assessment report.

The Cub House presented by PNC, the Louisville Zoo's new early learning play space, will be a part of the Snow Leopard exhibit set to open in 2018 with the full exhibit opening in 2019. With this grant, the Zoo will also expand its education programming to establish a new platform for early childhood education while also providing unique experiences for young children, including nose-to-nose encounters with endangered animals such as the Snow Leopard. As the first facility on Zoo grounds uniquely dedicated to the earliest learners, *The Cub House presented by PNC* will focus on child-centered learning processes.

"Science is a cornerstone of a child's development. Our partnership with the Zoo builds upon PNC's long-term commitment to provide early learning opportunities for our youngest children so they are ready for school," said Chuck Denny, PNC regional president for Greater Louisville. The initiative is part of PNC Grow Up Great, a program that helps children from birth to age 5 prepare for school. PNC offers employees 40 hours of paid time off a year to volunteer in Grow Up Great early education programs.

The Cub House presented by PNC and Zoo Programming

The Zoo's early childhood programming will include two pilot programs: one with the George Unseld Early Learning Center (GUELC) and the other with a small group of Louisville Zoo member families with children ages 3 to 5 who are not currently enrolled in a preschool. - The GUELC program will include classroom kits, Zoo educator visits, teacher training and Zoo-venture outings for families. Both programs will support kindergarten readiness and promote child-centered learning while fostering the development of 21st century learning skills that offer connections to simple math, economics, science, culture, and the ecology of the Himalayas.

"PNC's funding will help us provide a new innovative play space for our youngest learners with top notch early childhood programming as we expand our education offerings," said Louisville Zoo director John Walczak. "We're thrilled to partner with PNC in contributing to the advancement of early childhood education in our community. It's these early memory-making moments that children have with animals that help build the foundation for our mission of bettering the bond between people and our planet."

The Cub House presented by PNC will be an early learning space featuring numerous ways to play, explore, investigate and discover. The center will include places to observe snow leopards and explore an ice cave; visit a Nepalese-themed marketplace; play and discover skills in a technology zone; and expand their imaginations in a story time nook and an art sensory area.

"Learning through play is one of the most effective ways to build skills and prepare our young children for kindergarten, giving them a solid foundation for lifelong learning," said Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Donna Hargens. "We're so excited to partner with PNC and the Louisville Zoo on initiatives such as this that ensure students enter school happy, healthy and ready to learn."

About the Louisville Zoo

The Louisville Zoo, a non-profit organization and state zoo of Kentucky, is dedicated to bettering the bond between people and our planet by providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors, and leadership in scientific research and conservation education. The Zoo is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

About PNC

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a \$350 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.